(a) whether it is a fact that the experts of the National Research Laboratory for conservation of cultural property have ruled out the possibility of air pollution as being responsible for the deterioration and defacing of marbles of Taj Mahal;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these experts have come to the conclusion that physical weathering in the form of cracking is mainly due to the stress created by the load on the marble slabs and stress due to swelling of iron dowells and jerks received during quarrying; and

(c) if so, what steps Government are proposing to take to check the deterioration and defacing of marbles of the world famous Taj Mahal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) and (b) According to the studies of National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property (NRLC), Lucknow, the main causes for the formation of cracks are the load exerted on the lower marble slabs by the upper ones, rusting of iron dowels and stress produced in the marble-stones at the time of quarring. These studies, however, have also shown that at present air pollution is not causing deterioration and defacing of the marble in the Taj.

(c) Scientists and experts are working on a special project to find out a long-term solution to the problem. Simultaneously, cleaning of the marble surface by "clay pack method", developed by Archaeological Survey of India, filling of cracks, restoration of missing and damaged pieces of marble wherever necessary, changing of rusted iron dowels with neo-errosive ones and continuous monitoring and sampling of the ambient air to keep a check on the pollution levels are already being undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Notice of strike given by AIMIC in respect of escalating prices of high speed diesel oils and tyre prices

2923. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the members of the All India Motor Transport Corporation are greatly agitated over the escalating prices of high-speed diesel oil;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government's commitments on tyre pricing and distribution have not been fulfilled;

(c) whether it is a fact that they have threatened to go on a nation-wide strike if their grievances are not redressed; and

(d) if so, what remedial steps Government are taking to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Industry which is administratively concerned with the matter has intimated that Government have not given any commitment regarding tyre pricing and distribution.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The demands have been brought to the notice of Ministries of Industry, Finance and Petroleum which are the concerned Ministries for appropriate action.

Refusal of permission to Indian Cricket team for Asia Cup in Bangladesh

2924. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had refused permission to the Cricket Control Board of India to allow the Indian Cricket team to participate in the Asia Cup Cricket which was to be held in Bangladesh; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIN-

ISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) and (b) A decision was taken not to participate in the Asia Cup Cricket Tournament as it was feared that the safety of Indian cricketers could not be guaranteed in the context of the then prevailing law and order situation in Bangladesh. The decision was taken in the interest of the safety of Indian players.

Air crafts in Vayudoot fleet

2925. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of aircrafts in Vayudoot fleet at present;

(b) whether Government propose to add few more aircrafts in its fleet; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI MOTI LAL VORA): (a) The fleet of Vayudoot consists of the following aircraft:

Type	Number of aircraft
Dornier-228	10
HS-748	4
F-27	4

(b) and (c) A committee has been set up by Vayudoot to make an assessment of the additional aircraft capacity required and to make recommendations about the type and number of aricraft to be acquired. In addition, a few more Turbo-prop aircraft will be progressively transferred from Indian Airlines to Vayudoot.

Flights and earnings of Air India and Indian Airlines

2926. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of flights undertaken by Air India and Indian Airlines during the years 1985-86, 1986-87 and till January of the current financial year;

(b) what were the corresponding figures of these flights during the years 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85; and

(c) what is the total earnings of Air India and Indian Airlines from 1985-86 till January 1988 and earnings for years 1982-83 to 1984-85?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI MOTI LAL VORA): (a) and (b) The number of flights undertaken by Air India and Indian Airlines during the years 1982-83 to 1987-88 is as under:—

Year	Air India	Indian Airlines
1982-83	7,749	61,740
1983-84	8,101	62,544
1984-85	8,150	70,620
1985-86	8,081	75,913
1986-87	8,016	78,288
1987-88	7,411 (figures available only upto Dec. 87)	64,984 (Upto Jan. 88)

(c) The total earnings (Revenue) of Air India and Indian Airlines from 1982-83 to 1987-88 is as under:—

Year	Air India	Indian Airlines
	(Rupees in crores)	
1982-83	719.93	457.44
1983-84	792.36	540.93
1984-85	854.31	621.57
1985-86	893.88	723.81
1986-87	925.46	828.70
1987-88	754.00 (figures available only upto Dec. 1987)	765.76 (Upto Jan. 88)